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become a part of the constitution if it is accepted by a majority of the people voting upon it at the next general election.

S. GALE LOWRIE.

**Legislative Reference: Nebraska.** Nebraska, in continuation of the work already begun by the state historical society, has, this winter, established a state legislative reference bureau. The new bureau is affiliated with the department of political science and sociology and with the college of law of the University of Nebraska. The director is appointed by the board of regents of the university and his tenure of office and rank are similar to that of a professor at the head of a university department. The law distinctly states that training in legislative reference and in knowledge of Nebraska institutions be provided for university students of the above designated departments, with practical experience during legislative sessions. The requirements for the work of the bureau are stated in detail and are similar to those of such bureaus as are already established. Bill drafting is included and a point is made of special service upon municipal subjects for the use of city and village officials and other citizens. The bureau is to be housed with the university except for the months which are immediately devoted to preparatory and actual work with the legislature, when more convenient rooms will be provided by the board of public lands and buildings.

This new department, with its proximity to the university, its definite educational affiliations and aims, its broad scope of work distinctly outlined and the absence of political influence in the matter of appointments, has every opportunity for a future of definite usefulness to the state. To carry on the work for the next two years, approximately \$11,000 has been appropriated.

ETHEL CLELAND.

**Municipal Charter Revision: Newark.** A proposed charter for the city of Newark, which was the result of much discussion among the civic organizations of the city, was presented for the consideration of the New Jersey legislature of 1911. The act, in form a permissive statute applicable to all cities of the first class, failed of passage, but it is believed by its friends that substantial progress was made toward its ultimate adoption.

The "commission" consists of a mayor and four commissioners. The mayor is elected for two years while the commissioners hold

office for four, two retiring every second year. The mayor receives a salary of not to exceed ten thousand dollars to be determined by the commission. The commissioners receive five thousand each and are required to give bond in the same sum. The commission is invested with all legislative power together with supervisory administrative authority. The proposed act conveys to that body all the powers hitherto exercised by the mayor, council, board of finance, and the various commissioners of streets, water, fire, health, police, play grounds and shade trees, except as specifically elsewhere provided for. Its powers may be grouped as ordinance making, financial and administrative. As an ordinance-making authority its power extends not only to those subjects hitherto mentioned in existing law but certain others specifically mentioned such as the regulation of rates for street railways, electric lights, gas and telephones, the construction and ownership of conduits for wires, the control of traffic and the elimination of grade crossings. As a financial authority the commission levies taxes, borrows money, makes appropriations and fixes salaries. Its administrative power includes a general supervision over the officers of the city and the appointment of comptroller, treasurer, members of the board of assessment and revision, commissioners of assessment, clerk engineer, "superintendents, surveyors, supervisors, clerks and such other employees to aid such commission in the discharge of its duties and the carrying out and performance of the work and labor of the departments and affairs of such city under its government, control and management, as the public interest may from time to time require or as such commission may deem necessary and proper." Such appointments must be made according to the civil service laws of the state.

The mayor is declared to be the chief executive officer of the city. His duty is to oversee, with full power of investigation, the work of officers and departments and is given the power of a police magistrate. He appoints and may remove at will the commissioner of health, the fire commissioner, police commissioner, corporation counsel, superintendent of buildings, board of excise and commissioner of accounts.

This charter appears to be the result of an attempt to secure the essential features of commission government at the same time seeking to preserve the characteristics of the mayor and council system. The result is that eminent success is not attained in either direction. As an example of government by commission it is true

that the general ticket and the short ballot are secured, but the powers of appointment and removal and of administrative direction are divided between the mayor and the commission. Furthermore the commissioners are not the heads of the several departments. No attempt is made to introduce those frequent accompaniments of the commission system, the initiative, the referendum, the recall and the non-partisan direct nominations. As an example of the older system the manner in which the administrative authority and responsibility is divided defeats any clear delimitation between administrative and legislative organs. The net result is a mayor and council system with the administrative authority more centralized in the mayor than formerly but still seriously weakened by sharing with the council, and a council reduced in number and retaining a share of the administrative power marching under the misapplied title of a "commission."

FRANK G. BATES.

**Municipal Charter Revision: Pittsburgh and Scranton.**

The Pennsylvania legislature, recently adjourned, materially changed the form of the legislative departments of the municipal governments of Pittsburgh and Scranton.

In place of a bicameral council, there is substituted a council of but one house; instead of the old system of ward representation in one house and a form of representation proportional to the number of inhabitants, in the other, ward lines are eliminated in the selection of the new councilmen; instead of sixty-seven men in its council, Pittsburgh now has nine, and Scranton, five; and where previously members of the select council were elected for four years (one half chosen each two years), and those of the common council, for two years, now all the members are elected for four years. The salaries of the councilmen are to be fixed by ordinance, within the maximum and the minimum limits of \$6,500 and \$2,000 respectively.

The mayor retains the veto power over measures, and is given authority to veto any item or items of appropriation bills. With the approval of the council, he selects the heads of the administrative departments, and retains the power of removing them, by written order, giving his reasons, transmitted to the council. A further method of the discharge of departmental heads embodied in the new plan provides for a formal hearing and trial before the council, presided